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having an outlet through which the ink can be discharged, the ink cartridges being detachably joined by a joint mechanism, wherein the joint mechanism comprises at least one insertion projection engageable with a corresponding at least one insertion hole, and wherein when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed against each other.

REMARKS

Claims 22-34 and 36-42 are present in this application. By this Amendment, claim 40 has been amended, and claim 35 has been canceled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a). Without conceding the objection, claim 35 has been canceled. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 22-25, 27-30, 32-35 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,106,112 to Okubo et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 22 defines an ink cartridge having first and second ink bags each comprising a bag main body storing ink and an outlet through which the ink can be discharged from the bag main body. Claim 22 further recites that when the first case and the second case are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed against each other by the first case and the second case. The Office Action contends that this subject matter is disclosed in Okubo with reference to Figure 3. In particular, the Office Action contends that the outlets in Okubo are "locked, one on top of the other." This

contention, however, is inaccurate, and Applicants thus respectfully submit that the rejection is misplaced.

Figure 1 in Okubo is a disassembled perspective view of the disclosed ink feed container. The container includes a case main body 1 supporting a first ink storage bag 22L, a partitioning plate 15, a second ink storage bag 22U and a casing lid 25. As shown in Figure 3, the first ink storage bag 22L has its ink feed port 23L secured in a positioning recess 7 via locking ribs 9. With reference to Figure 1, the partitioning plate 15 includes an engagement projection 14 that engages the lower engagement hole 10 in the front wall 6 of the case main body 1. See also Figure 2 and column 2, lines 21-33. With this arrangement, it is clear that the respective ink feed ports 23L and 23U are not pressed against each other as claimed. Rather, the upper ink feed port 23U engages the engagement projection 14. Applicants thus respectfully submit that the rejection is misplaced.

Claim 40 has been amended to recite that each of the first and second ink bags has an outlet through which the ink can be discharged, . . . wherein when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed against each other. With reference to the discussion concerning claim 22, Applicants respectfully submit that this subject matter is lacking in the Okubo patent.

With respect to the dependent claims, without conceding the Office Action's contentions, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 26, 31 and 36-39 and the indication of allowability of claims 41 and 42.

With respect to the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner to any extent that such statement characterizes the invention in a manner at variance with the actual wording of the claims.

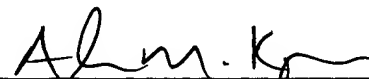
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claim by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version With Markings To Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

40. (Twice Amended) An ink cartridge comprising:

a plurality of ink cartridges including a first ink cartridge for housing a first ink bag storing first ink, and a second ink cartridge for housing a second ink bag storing second ink of a different color than the first ink, each of the first and second ink bags having an outlet through which the ink can be discharged, the ink cartridges being detachably joined by a joint mechanism, wherein the joint mechanism comprises at least one insertion projection engageable with a corresponding at least one insertion hole, and wherein when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed against each other.